



Epsilon Theory

Inception

April 14, 2020



You infected my mind. You betrayed me. But you can make amends.

If you're going to perform inception, you need the simplest version of the idea - the one that will grow naturally in the subject's mind.

You mustn't be afraid to dream a little bigger, darling.

-- Inception (2010)

We're going to change the world, you know ... you and me.

It won't happen the way you think, because you think that someone is going to lead you. You think that someone is going to organize you. You think that someone is going to give you a top-down, political Answer in the form of something to march for or somebody to vote for, some 'ism that requires your allegiance and attention.

You mustn't be afraid to dream a little bigger, darling.

I would no more give you an Answer than I would infect you with a virus. Because that's what every top-down, political Answer is, a contagious virus that attacks the mind rather than the body. A contagious virus that cripples human will and human autonomy. A contagious virus that **transforms you into a Rhinoceros.**

An Answer is not the solution. An Answer is the *problem*. An Answer is the *disease*.

Giving you an Answer is what THEY do. It's what all of the high-functioning sociopaths and political entrepreneurs who control all of the myriad of social institutions that have betrayed us do.



Yes, betrayed.

That's exactly what has happened with the onslaught of the *real* virus. That's what Rusty is writing about in ***First the People***. The past few months are not a litany of errors and honest mistakes by the institutions we have charged with protecting us from disease and ruin. They are a litany of *betrayals*, and their Answers - their False Stories - have been revealed as lies.

First we're going to vaccinate ourselves to their Answers, to their False Stories, so that we think for ourselves again. Without this, we will inevitably fall back into the patterns of crony capitalism and obscene financialization that got us here in the first place.

It's a vaccine that we don't administer anymore ... an intentional decision by **the high-functioning sociopaths and political entrepreneurs who rule us**, of course. Like all effective vaccines, it mimics the virus itself in its ability to trigger a physiological response in us. They want to nudge you into allegiance to a policy or a vote or a party. We want to un-nudge you into independence of spirit and thought. They want to infect you with an Answer. We want to inoculate you with a Process.

The Process is one of the Old Stories. It is, in fact, the Oldest Story of what makes for a good and just human society. It is a narrative that has directly motivated hundreds of millions of people to organize themselves in hundreds of thousands of beneficial social forms, large and small, for thousands of years.

We're going to use that incepted Process to burn down these systems of iniquity from within and below. We're going use that incepted Process to build something better together, as brothers and sisters exercising our birthright - our autonomy of mind.

I'm going to tell you exactly how we're going to develop millions and millions of doses of the Old Story vaccine, and I'm going to tell you exactly how we're going to administer them and exactly how we are going to change the world from below and from within.

And you won't believe me.

I mean, this happens all the time. I will sit down with someone and walk them through the entire plan ... how we're developing the science of what Isaac Asimov called "psychohistory", how that gives us the ability to not only measure the narratives of social control that oligarchic institutions broadcast but also to design effective jamming narratives of our own, how we create a decentralized epistemic community of distributed trust and mutual support that we call the Pack, *how we burn down these oligarchic institutions from below by jamming their Answers and from within by replacing the current sociopathic leadership with members of the Pack* ... and it is literally as if a switch goes off in their head and their eyes go dim. But then I'll say "yada-yada-Trump" or "yada-yada-Biden" or "yada-yada-the-Fed" or "yada-yada-Bitcoin" and they'll perk right up again!

Yes, there were some big words in that last paragraph. But that's not what shuts people's brains off. It's the political, top-down Answer virus - even as damaged as it is, even as revealed as it is - that does that. It's the Answer virus that shuts down the part of our brain where we exercise our autonomy of will and our social imagination. It's the Answer virus that increases our neural dependence on other-regarding emotions like jealousy and schadenfreude. It's the Answer virus that dominates all the little dopamine economies that rule our world. It's the Answer virus that we're going to eradicate, and it has an intrinsic defense mechanism that prevents its hosts from hearing the ideas that would threaten it.

Honestly, though, it's fine if you don't believe me. It's probably better, in fact, if you don't realize you're being vaccinated, if the Old Story takes you over and heals you unawares.

The Second Foundation hides in plain sight.

So here you go ... five projections of the Radiant ... five facets of the way in which we are going to change the world together. Whether you know it yet or not.

This is the Way



That's the tagline for *The Mandalorian*, and it's a good example of how to put an Old Story in a new meme, a new engram jacket that allows it to take root in your brain.

What is the Mandalorian Way? It's their creed. It's how they treat their kin and the treatment they expect to receive from their kin. Sure, it's got some weird fetish around putting on helmets and never taking them off, but at its core the Mandalorian Way is this:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

It's the Golden Rule. It's the Oldest Story of fundamental human ethics. You can find it in ancient Egyptian stories, preserved in papyri from the Middle Kingdom. You can find it in the ancient Sanskrit epic "Mahabarata", as the way in which *dharma* manifests itself in human affairs. You can find it in the ancient Greek writings of Thales and Pythagoras. You can find it in the ancient Persian texts of Zoroaster. But here's my favorite:

A gentile came before two teachers, Shammai the strict and Hillel the tolerant, and to each in turn said, "I will convert to Judaism if you can teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Shammai chased him away. But Hillel said to the gentile, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Now go and learn it."

The rest is commentary.

The Golden Rule is all you need to know to organize a good and just society.

Everything else, all of the rules and principles and books and words and laws that engulf us ... ALL of it ... is just commentary.

The Golden Rule is the vaccine. The Golden Rule is the simplest and most powerful form of the idea of reciprocity, ready and primed for inception in every human dreamer. The Golden Rule is the formal description of empathy. The Golden Rule is the only law of the Pack. The Golden Rule IS the full hearts of Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose.

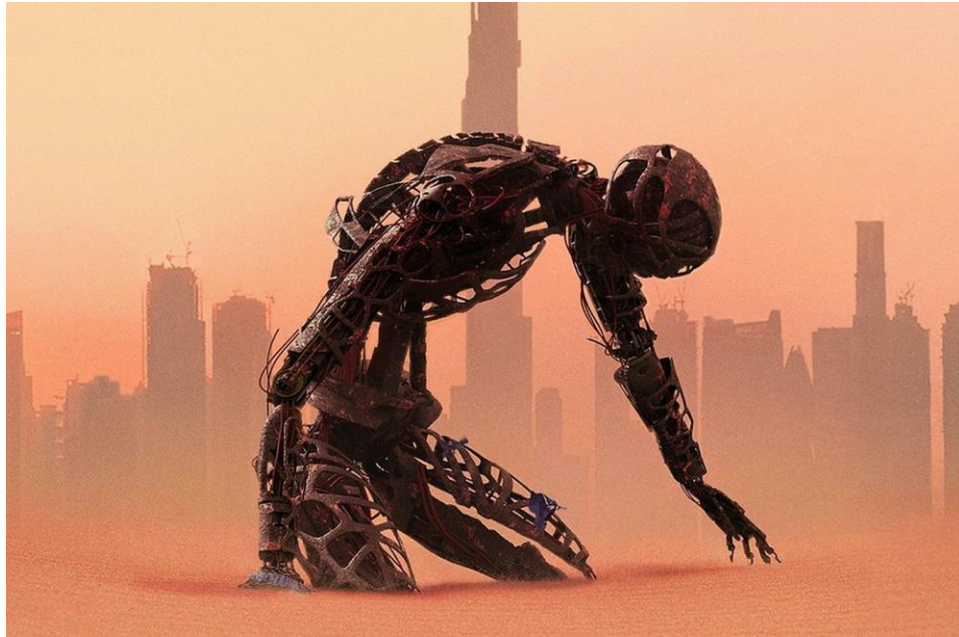
The Golden Rule is the meme that we're going to inject in a mass-customized way straight into everyone's veins with the Narrative Machine.

And then YOU are going to burn down the current system of oligarchic iniquity from below and within. And then YOU are going to change the world.

All on your own. With no centralized organization and no Answer imposed from above.

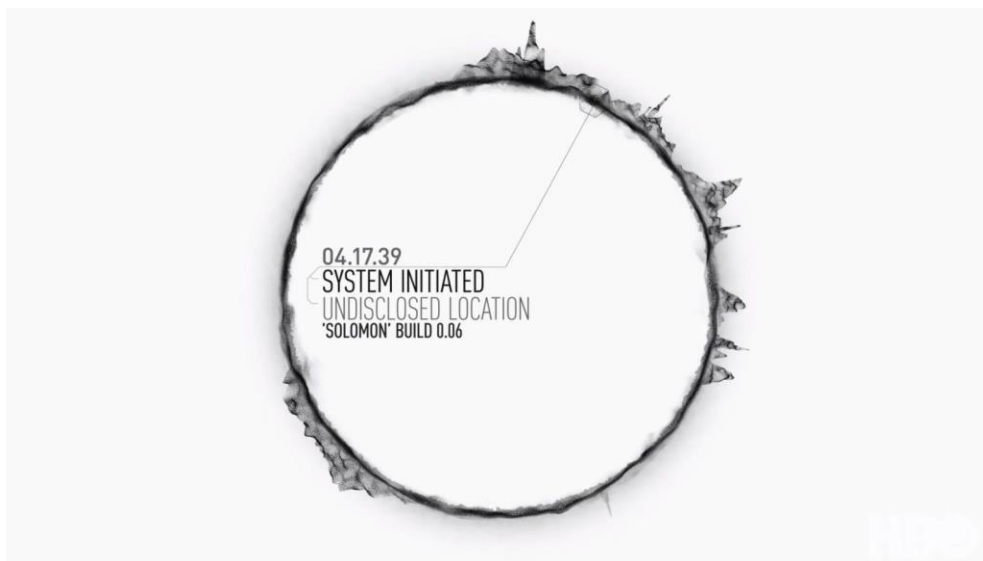
How does that work? Here, I'll show you (although this is the point where the Answer virus defense mechanism begins to switch off lots of brains). I'll start with how a mass-customized meme of empathy and reciprocity is created and distributed.

Free Will Is Not Free



That's the tagline for the current season of *Westworld*, which I like even more than the former tagline, courtesy of *Romeo and Juliet*: "These violent desires have violent ends". The entire series, like *The Mandalorian*, is a great example of wrapping Old Stories in a new memetic jacket.

The wrapper for season 3 is the story of a gigantic computer program called The System, that simulates the lives of every human being and uses that information to favor the promising humans and ignore the flawed. It doesn't *predict* what humans as a group will do. It doesn't work on some top-down model of how humans behave. No, it *calculates* what each individual human will do in response to different stimuli, and then it *observes* the simulated result of those individual actions.



It's an actor-oriented model and system at massive scale, and I wrote about its potential market application a year and a half ago.



We're Doing It Wrong

"I want to suggest a different way to think about markets, a non-anthropomorphic model that works WITH the revolutionary invention of AI and Big Compute.

The market is not a clockwork machine.

The market is a bonfire.

No human can algorithmically PREDICT how a fire will burn. Neither can a computer. No matter how much computing power you throw at a bonfire, a general closed-end solution for a macro system like this simply does not exist.

But a really powerful computer can CALCULATE how a fire will burn. A really powerful computer can SIMULATE how a fire will burn. Not by looking for historical patterns in fire. Not by running econometric regressions. Not by figuring out the "secret formula" that "explains" a macro phenomenon like a bonfire. That's the human way of seeing the world, and if you use your computing power to do more of that, you are wasting your time and your money. No, a really powerful computer can perceive the world differently. It can "see" every tiny piece of wood and every tiny volume of oxygen and every tiny erg of energy. It "knows" the rules for how wood and oxygen and heat interact. Most importantly – and most differently from humans – this really powerful computer can "see" all of these tiny pieces and "know" all of these tiny interactions at the same time. It can take a snapshot of ALL of this at time T and calculate what ALL of this looks like at time $T+1$, and then do that calculation again to figure out what ALL of this looks like at time $T+2$.

Want to guess who spends more money on Big Compute than everyone else in the world combined?

It's the U.S. government, through the Dept. of Defense and the Dept. of Energy.

Know why they've spent BILLIONS of dollars on the world's most advanced supercomputers?

To calculate fire."



So I want to calculate fire, too, and it no longer costs billions to get the massive computer processing power we need to do it. But the calculation of fire I want isn't the simulation of a nuclear explosion. **The calculation of fire I want is the simulation of a *narrative* explosion.**

Our actor-oriented behavioral model - the equivalent of the laws of atomic physics - is the Common Knowledge (CK) game. Our observational and simulation technology - the equivalent of a real or simulated bomb technology - is Natural Language Processing (NLP). Put them together and you have **the Narrative Machine**. There, I just told you the most powerful secret I know.

What can we do with this secret? Today we can observe the way in which some narratives infect a lot of people and others don't, the way in which narratives are born, live and die. Tomorrow we can simulate the life cycle of hypothetical narratives, and we can use that knowledge to take action in narrative-world, both to jam the autonomy-killing Answers of oligarchic systems and to promote the empathy and reciprocity-promoting Old Story of the Golden Rule.

Here's an example.

His Name is Robert Paulson



That's one of the taglines for *Fight Club*, which is probably the most quoted work of fiction in Epsilon Theory. Well, after *The Godfather* and *1984*, of course. *Fight Club*, like *The Mandalorian* and like *Westworld*, is another great example of wrapping Old Stories in a new meme jacket.

Robert Paulson, played by Meat Loaf in the movie version, is a nobody so long as he is part of the Fight Club gang, part of Project Mayhem. Like all of his fellows, he literally has no name within the group. But then a stunt goes badly awry, and Robert Paulson is killed. In death, his name is restored. In death, his name is Robert Paulson.

**Remember the 9-11 obituaries
published by the *New York Times*?**

I bet you do. If you are aware of them, it is impossible to forget them. if you read them, it is impossible not to weep.



Giving the dead a name and telling their individual stories is one of the most powerful narrative techniques to incept a meme of empathy and reciprocity. If they wanted to, this is how media outlets and the oligarchic institutions they represent could depoliticize COVID-19. If they wanted to, giving the COVID-19 dead a name and telling their stories would immediately transform many of your attitudes toward both the crisis and institutional response policies.

They do not want to.

So we will.

Not sure how. Not sure when. Not sure to what audience or in what memetic format. But we will. And wherever that meme takes root, political and social behaviors will begin to change in entirely unpredictable specific ways but entirely beneficial general ways.

It's not an Answer. It's a memetically-delivered vaccine of empathy and reciprocity.

I remember when I was first vaccinated.

Forgive. But Never Forget.



That's the tagline for the Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation, the most powerful artifact of remembrance I've ever experienced. This is a memorial to the 200,000 French citizens who were deported to Nazi concentration camps from Vichy France. It's built on the tip of the Ile de la Cit'e in Paris, literally in the shadow of Notre Dame. It's also literally built on the site of an old morgue. Underground, inside the single claustrophobic hallway chamber, are 200,000 tiny glass crystals lit from within, one for each life snuffed out. As you leave the hallway to return to the living you see the inscription: ***Forgive, but never forget.***

Not one person in a thousand has ever heard of the Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation, much less visited. My father took me there when I was 12 years old. He read the inscription to me, told me what it meant. It vaccinated me for the rest of my life. Thanks, Dad.

Forgive ... full hearts. Never forget ... clear eyes.



Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose.

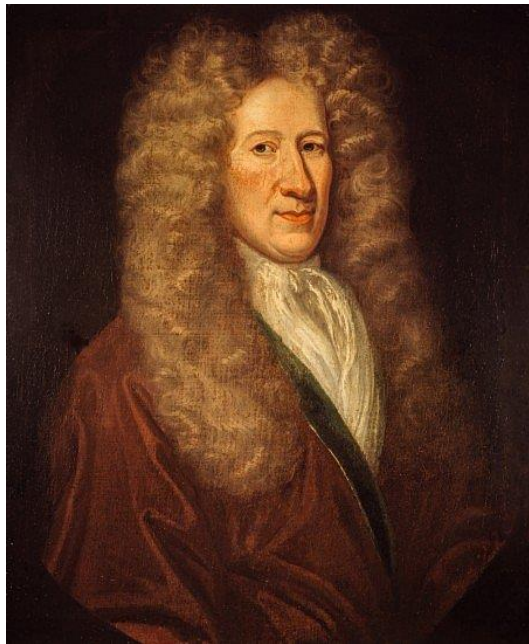
That's the tagline for "Friday Night Lights" ... a great book, a good movie, and a great TV series ... an amazing trifecta of memetic rewrapping by Buzz Bissinger and Peter Berg. It's about high school football in Odessa, Texas. Which is to say it's about how to make your way in a fallen world.

What's the secret to life, the universe, and everything? *Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose.*

It's not an Answer. It's a Process.

Some will absorb this memetic vaccine through a series of tweets. Some will absorb this memetic vaccine through a blog. Some will absorb this vaccine through a movie or a TV series. Some, like me, will absorb this vaccine in an obscure Parisian memorial.

The Narrative Machine will show us what works, and for whom. And that's where we will be. Supporting that. Amplifying that. Rewrapping that. And over time, over the next five years ... ten years ... twenty years ... it will ALL change.



"Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who writes its laws."

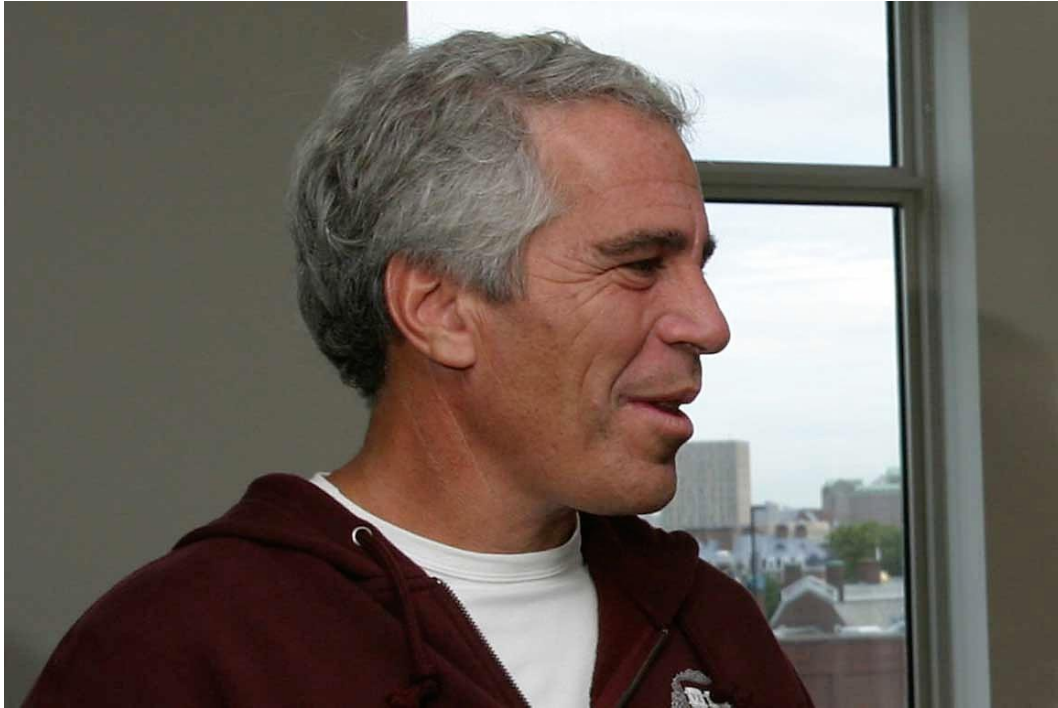
-- **Andrew Fletcher, Scottish patriot**

These songs of reciprocity and empathy will spread, fractal-like. First we will sing them as individuals. Then we will sing them as packs. Then we will sing them as communities, both geographic and epistemic. Then we will sing them as a nation.

The revolution will NOT be televised. The revolution will happen invisibly, within a critical mass of our individual hearts. The way all true revolutions happen.

You know when I finally figured that out? When Jeffrey Epstein died in jail.

#BITFD



#BITFD is my personal hashtag for my personal tagline: **Burn. It. The. Fuck. Down.**

I first used it in a tweet as a way to process my feelings after Jeffrey Epstein, shown here in one of his many Harvard sweatshirts, was discovered dead of asphyxiation in his jail cell.



I'm a Superstitious Man

"I'm a superstitious man, and if some unlucky accident should befall him — if he should get shot in the head by a police officer, or if he should hang himself in his jail cell, or if he's struck by a bolt of lightning — then I'm going to blame some of the people in this room." - Vito Corleone

Was it murder? Was it suicide?

I'm a superstitious man. I don't care. I'm blaming the people in the room regardless.

What room?

The room of violence done to children with impunity by the powerful and the wealthy. The room of the corrupt State. The room of crony capitalism and obscene financialization, propped up by the apparatchiks and hangers-on and wannabes and “journalists” of District One.

Epstein's death made me feel the same way I felt in October 2008, when the US Treasury put the full faith and credit of the United States behind the unsecured debt of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley and JP Morgan and Bank of America, when the pleasant skin of “*Yay, democracy!*” was sloughed off to reveal the naked sinews of power beneath.

The same way I feel now in April 2020.

When Jeffrey Epstein died in that jail cell, I realized that the people in that room of violence and power and wealth will never be defeated on a single point of failure like his testimony at trial. Or like the bankruptcy of AIG. Or like the election this November.

It's not that the election this November doesn't matter. Of course it matters. It's just that it doesn't matter in a way that will change the *system* of bank bailouts and Jeffrey Epsteins and COVID-19 institutional betrayals. The *system* of sociopathic oligarchy will survive every single focused confrontation, every single potential point of failure. That's what their narrative Answers are FOR. That's what sociopathic oligarchs DO.

So what do WE do?

We DO unto others as we would have them do unto us.

And by so doing we create a million points of failure for the system of sociopathic oligarchy. We create points of failure AT SCALE.

How do we do THAT?

Well, I told you what Rusty and I are doing. We're doing the whole psychohistory, Narrative Machine, AI/Big Data/Big Compute thing in order to vaccinate the world against sociopathy. You can help us directly with that if you like, **by joining our Pack** and contributing your own words and ideas on the ~~Wittenberg church doors~~ Epsilon Theory website. You can spread the word of a new, secular Reformation to anyone who will listen. Not everyone will, and that's okay. We will eventually reach them, too, through Old Stories of empathy and reciprocity delivered with the help of the ~~printing press~~ Narrative Machine.



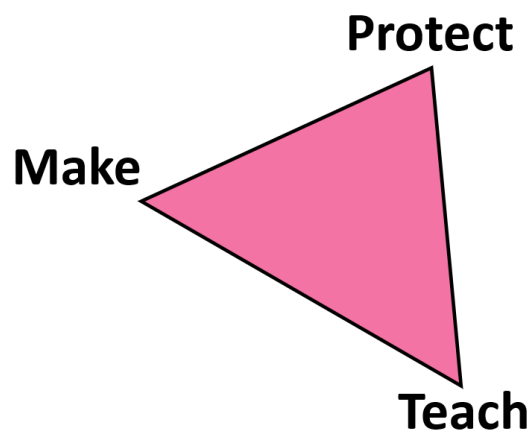
Or you can do your own thing. Both will work. Both will converge. Both will fix the world over time. I mean, the whole point of our philosophy is that we're not controlling this from the top-down. This isn't an Answer. It's a Process based on self-autonomy and reciprocity. It's a Process that embraces liberty and justice for all. You know ... those words that we pledged our allegiance to when we were kids.

So here's what you can DO on your own.



Once In A Lifetime

First, find your pack. Find your partners. Find the people who will treat you as an autonomous human being worthy of respect and empathy, not as a means to an end. There is no more important thing any human being can do to create a life worth living than to find their pack.



Make, Protect, Teach

Second - and here's where all of the Answer viruses really go into high gear shutting down brains - devote yourself to a life of Making, Protecting and Teaching within and around your pack. See *yourself* with clear eyes through those lenses, through the DOING of Make, Protect, Teach, and watch how your world begins to change.

I'm not saying to become a monk. I'm not saying you can't be successful in the world-as-it-is. After all, as Don Barzini would say, we are not communists. Just don't fall for the oldest trick in the sociopathic oligarchy book. Don't mistake Caesar's tools and Caesar's goals for your *identity*. You want to take Caesar's money? You want to use Caesar's tools to create a better life for your family and your pack? Yes, please. But the moment you start to identify *with* Caesar, the moment you give Caesar your heart because that Answer virus he infected you with makes you believe that you *matter* to his mighty cause ... well, that's the moment you become cannon fodder for that cause. And sooner or later, you *will* be sacrificed.

And I'm not saying that you can't be politically active in the world as-it-is. I'm not saying you can't or shouldn't care who's elected to what office this November. Of course you should care. Of course you should vote, **especially if you can vote FOR candidates who represent the values of Making. Protecting and Teaching in their own lives**, if you can vote FOR candidates who are not professional politicians or professional oligarchs, both of which are the surest career paths to sociopathy I know. There aren't many of those non-sociopathic candidates to vote for right now. But there will be. In the meantime, just don't fall for the second oldest trick in the sociopathic oligarchy book. Don't mistake the merest part of your political participation - your vote - for the sum total of your political participation. To be a citizen is so much more than voting once every few years! To be a citizen is to DO.

So go do.

All the rest is commentary.

What are you waiting for? Someone to give you permission? Someone to give you a cause worth fighting for? Someone to organize you? Pffft. That's the Answer virus talking in your ear. Each and every one of you knows perfectly well what you can do. Each and every one of you knows perfectly well that you can do more.



"Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are."
- St. Augustine

We're all angry right now. There's plenty of that to go around. What's in short supply these days is courage. Courage to create a tiny point of failure in the system of sociopathic oligarchy. Courage to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

You may think your individual act of DOING is a small thing. I tell you it is the only thing.

We're going to change the world, you know ... you and me.

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